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THE PACIFIC UNITARIAN SCHOOL *for the* MINISTRY

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

A RECORD OF TEN
YEARS' WORK
1904-1914

BY
THE PRESIDENT
EARL MORSE WILBUR

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A RECORD *of* TEN YEARS'
WORK *and* AN OUTLOOK
TOWARD THE FUTURE

(Read at the Pacific Unitarian Conference at
Portland, May 12, 1914.)

ORIGIN OF THE SCHOOL.



AT the session of the Pacific Unitarian Conference held in Portland in September, 1889, twenty-five years ago, the Rev. Charles W. Wendte of Oakland offered a proposition for the establishment of a Training School for Ministers at Berkeley, the seat of the University of California; and before the Conference adjourned resolutions were unanimously adopted and a committee appointed to give the matter practical effect. This was the first outward move for the realization of hopes and plans which even then had already for over ten years been earnestly cherished by certain individuals. Before the next session of the Conference the plan had been put into work-

able shape, and had been cordially endorsed by the National Conference. Of the obstacles encountered within the following two or three years in attempting to put the plan into operation, it is not necessary here to speak. Suffice it to say that, though it was never forgotten or in the least given up by those who had it most at heart, the whole matter had to be abandoned for over ten years. It was not until 1904 that it was again taken up and that effective steps were taken for establishing what has since come to be known as the Pacific Unitarian School for the Ministry. And now that ten years more have elapsed since the founding of the school, and the Conference is again meeting where the idea of it was first publicly discussed, it is a suitable time to render an account of what the school has been able to accomplish during this period of its infancy, and to ask what the churches may fairly expect of it, or be expected to do for it, in the years to come.

REASON FOR THE SCHOOL.

It has more than once been asked by persons who had only a hazy notion of the conditions and history of our cause on this Coast, why, with no more

churches than we yet have here, we need have a divinity school here at all. So far as this Conference is concerned, the grounds were twenty-five years ago maturely discussed and considered sufficient. But the general answer is that our churches here are otherwise too far from the source of supply for their pulpits. It is as though our New England churches had been obliged during the first two generations of our movement there, to have all their ministers sent out from old England. And the specific answer is found in the experience of our church work here. For example, in the 'nineties, after a period of great missionary opportunity, and up to the present day unparalleled church extension, twenty-two organized churches* on this Coast were obliged to suspend activities, and in a large proportion of cases for sheer inability to obtain a minister. The fact that we have since regained eight of these stations, and shall in time regain the most of the rest, does nothing to weaken the argument for the importance of a reliable local source of supply. Hardly a church on the Coast more than five years old but has first or last had

*List in THE PACIFIC UNITARIAN for April, 1912, page 172.

this argument pressed upon it. Again and again a church losing its minister has had to wait for months, and see its work run down, while the East was scoured by correspondence for a man who might come out, but even when he had at length arrived and been settled, without opportunity for the mutual trial which a candidacy affords, might not prove to be at all the man wanted, or might not find himself at all suited to his field. Few, if any, have had the opportunity of knowing so well as I how many of these misfits there have been. They were largely unavoidable in the circumstances; but had there been an adequate source of local supply, they might have been largely avoided. The problem is not by any means solved, but the establishing of the Pacific Unitarian School was the first step toward a solution, and every stage in its growth will make the problem less acute.

EARLY HANDICAPS.

Before going on now to relate what the school has thus far accomplished, let me first sketch a proper mental background against which to regard its work, by reminding you that ten years ago it began at zero. It had not a single

student in sight; it had not a book for a library; it had not a dollar of endowment in hand or definitely promised; it had no building: the school consisted, in fact, of a sole teacher on the one hand and on the other of a promise of \$3,000 a year to meet the expenses of a five years' experiment. For two years it had only one teacher to teach all that was taught and do all that was done; for four years more this teacher had no assistance except in the way of relief in one or two minor courses of instruction and in clerical details. It was six years before a second full professor was added; and during the whole of its existence it has been painfully cramped for lack of sufficient funds to carry on its work, and has had to practice in every direction the most stringent economy. The only point in my mentioning at all any of the handicaps under which the school has worked, up to the present day, is in the fact that these must be taken into account before any just estimation can be made of what it has thus far been able to accomplish; and that they furnish ground for the expectation that, with these removed in large measure, as they now soon will be, the school will

achieve much larger results than hitherto.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS.

Coming now to speak of what has been accomplished in the last ten years in the process of building up a school to which our Western churches may in future look for many of their ministers, I have first to report that its published registers show that within this time a total of 110 students have been enrolled for instruction in its classes. Of these we may describe thirty-eight as of our own constituency, and seventy-two as outsiders. Many of these latter have been students from the other divinity schools at Berkeley; twelve of them have been students from the university, both coming to us for certain special courses; and some twenty-five have been men preaching in the pulpits of other denominations. I make no account of a considerable number of persons who have, with more or less regularity, attended our classes as visitors, and have gone away enlightened, encouraged, or inspired by the instruction received.

INCIDENTAL FORMS OF SERVICE.

I recall that in the course of an early conference on the possibilities that the

school might be expected to realize, one of its founders, Dr. Horace Davis, said to me that beside training ministers for our own pulpits, it could also do important work in several other ways: first, by furnishing a place where ministers of other denominations wishing to enter our fellowship might become familiar with our thought and spirit and be helped past what is usually a difficult transition, until they should be fitted for acceptable service with our churches; second, by contributing to the education of some who would never go into the ministry at all, but whom the school might make more intelligent and efficient laymen; third, by bringing about a more liberal spirit in men who might come to its classes from other denominations; and, fourth, by promoting the religious welfare of the great Orient through students of Oriental races who might study with us; and he expressed the judgment that each of these incidental forms of service would be well worth while. We have already done something in each of these directions; for, first, we have had among our students four orthodox ministers, who came to us to be "made over" and prepared for service in our own denomination, and

we might easily have had more had our scholarship funds been more ample; second, about two-thirds of the students whom we have counted as of our own will remain laymen, and not a few of them better informed and more devoted laymen because for a time they studied with us; third, although we never use our class-rooms for proselyting purposes, and should deem it hardly honorable in the circumstances to do so, yet there are already in the pulpits of other denominations on the Pacific Coast perhaps two score ministers who will at least have a juster appreciation of our religious movement, and will hold a less hostile attitude toward us, because of their having been for a time members of our classes; and, fourth, among our most earnest and appreciative students (not to mention a much larger number coming to us from the other schools) have been four from Oriental lands, through whom we hope to have made some contribution to the solution of the religious problems of Japan, China and India.

GRADUATES.

We have sent into the field ten men, eight of them as graduates and one after post-graduate study. Seven of these are

now serving churches, one is unsettled, and two are engaged in social service though meaning later to resume the ministry. Six are on this Coast, three in the East, and one in Japan. Four of our men have entered service on the Coast within the past year, while one here and one in the East have been promoted to higher positions.

STANDARDS OF THE SCHOOL.

From the first it was determined that whether our school might be large or small its standards should at all events be high. We have scrutinized candidates for admission most strictly, have refrained from encouraging far more candidates than we have admitted, and have so well succeeded that only one student thus far has, in his character, proved a disappointment to us. From the beginning we also established requirements for graduation as nearly as possible identical with those of the Harvard Divinity School, and have conferred degrees only on college graduates. At the same time one need not look further than our own pulpits on this Coast to see that the lack of a college course by no means necessarily stands in the way of the highest success in the ministry.

Hence we also provide a course for non-graduates, requiring them to supplement their theological work in the school by courses at the University just across the street from us. We have the past year adopted a new measure for stimulating a high quality of work by giving scholarship aid only to students reaching grade 1 or 2, and have had the most gratifying results from it.

INSTRUCTION.

Our association with the University and with the Pacific Theological Seminary, whose courses are all freely open to us, is of the greatest advantage, since in effect it largely increases the size of our faculty, and makes it possible for us to offer an unusually wide range of courses—in all over ninety courses of instruction in eight different departments of study directly related to the work of the ministry. In all our teaching we strive to keep in view the practical end; and while we aim always to cultivate thorough scholarship, yet we mean to ask at every point, What has all this to do with the actual work of the ministry? And our courses have been repeatedly and highly praised for their thoroughness and helpfulness, not

only by our own students but by those who have come from outside to take them.

LIBRARY.

Next to instruction, the most valuable agency in the process of education is a good library. It gives me much satisfaction, therefore, to be able to report that we have in ten years accumulated a collection of some 9,000 volumes and over 9,000 pamphlets. It has been well selected, is well balanced, and well suited to our needs, and I have reason to believe that in the line of Unitarian history and literature, to which we have paid particular attention, it has in many ways the most complete collection in the world.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

The founders of the school early felt justified in going beyond their original promises of support, and in the ten years under review contributed for maintenance over \$56,000, and for grounds, buildings and endowment a considerably larger amount. Numerous other friends, the greater number of them in the churches on this Coast, have also shown their interest in the school and their

faith in its work by gifts amounting to nearly \$28,000. The balance sheet for the year just closed shows the school in possession of property valued at over \$87,000, of which over \$51,000 are funds invested for endowment or buildings, and over \$27,000 are represented in the present educational plant. The estates of Mr. and Mrs. Cutting will, it is expected, be entirely settled within the present year, yielding the school not less than \$325,000 additional for endowment. Thus the last lingering doubt will be set at rest as to the permanency of the school. When this expectation shall have been realized we shall need first to provide the school with adequate buildings for its library and class-rooms in place of the present old and inflammable structure. We must not, however, for this purpose to any great extent use up funds required for permanent endowment, but instead must call upon the people of our churches to supplement the beneficence of the founders by generous gifts of their own. Beyond amounts already given for the purpose not less than \$35,000 will still be needed. When this need has been met we hope to be enabled by the new endowment to call another professor to our faculty.

These are our most immediate plans and hopes.

FUTURE NEEDS.

I have spoken of what the school has been able to accomplish during the ten years of its infancy, and have brought the story down to the point where it is about to lay aside its swaddling clothes. Some of its friends who have watched it most carefully have been appreciative enough to express surprise that it has been able, with so slender resources and equipment thus far, to accomplish even so much as I have said. We wish the results might have been much larger. We hope and expect that in the next ten years, with increased resources and facilities, they will be much larger. What can the churches of this Conference do to assist toward this end? In the first place, having interests vitally bound up with its welfare and success, they can continue to give it their hearty sympathy and loyal support, as they have so generously done in the past. It has now reached the point where it would not fail even without these; but with them it will succeed in fulfilling its mission much sooner and more completely.

In the second place, it will still need material assistance. I have spoken in comparatively large figures, but no one that knows the requirements of educational institutions needs to be told that it will still be far from affluent, and that its needs are sure to grow faster than its resources. In this very year it has suffered sharply for want of sufficient scholarship funds, and for this cause has been obliged to lose one student and has barely escaped losing a second. This will remain, as before, a steady object for the generosity both of the Alliances and of individuals.

In the third place, and most vitally of all, the churches can help the school by turning toward it the choicest and most promising of their sons. This matter will depend upon two co-operating agencies: the ministers and the parents. First of all upon the ministers. The school's doors will of course be open wide to every worthy applicant; and it will do all in its power to discover and interest candidates. But in the last analysis, in almost every case a young man feels attracted to the ministry because his own minister has, by deed or word, made him feel that its work is the noblest work to which he can give his life. And, further-

more, if our school is to be sought by as large a proportion of college men as we hope, a double responsibility for inspiring and interesting these will rest on our ministers at seats of learning; first of all the universities at Berkeley and Palo Alto, Eugene and Seattle, and after that the colleges at Spokane, Tacoma, Portland, Salem, San Jose, Los Angeles and Pomona. The share of the parents will be to sympathize with and encourage every such ambition on the part of their sons, although sad and surprising to say, cases are by no means unknown in which parents, themselves devoted to the church and loyal to their ministers, seem to dissuade their sons from this worthy choice.

The founders of the school have in the past ten years written their names high up on the roll of the patrons of liberal Christianity in this country. They have conferred a great and lasting benefit on the whole cause of our churches on this Coast. We have as yet begun to see only the scanty first fruits of the harvest; but if we still go on to bear our due share in the labor, the full harvest cannot fail.

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